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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 52nd MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TEIRLINCK (Belgium)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 12.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 119: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION FOR THE REFERENDUM IN WESTERN SAHARA (continued) (A/49/559/Add.1 and Corr.1, A/49/771/Add.1; A/C.5/49/L.47)

1. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) (A/49/559/Add.1), recalled that, in its decision 49/466, the General Assembly had authorized the Secretary-General to enter into commitments for the maintenance of the Mission in the amount of $6.4 million gross for the period from 1 December 1994 to 31 January 1995. An additional amount of $2.2 million had been authorized for the month of January 1995, subject to the decision of the Security Council on the deployment of the required staff for the acceleration of the work of the Identification Commission and the review by the Advisory Committee.

2. In its resolution 973 (1995), the Security Council had approved the expansion of MINURSO as proposed by the Secretary-General in his report to the Council (S/1994/1420). In that report, the Secretary-General had informed the Council, inter alia, that, given the large number of applications received as at the end of November 1994, the only way to complete identification and registration of eligible voters in a reasonable time would be through a major reinforcement of personnel and the establishment of six additional centres and five mobile identification and registration teams; and had further expressed the hope that, by 31 March 1995, progress achieved in the identification and registration process would reach a level that would enable him to recommend 1 June 1995 as the date for the start of the transitional period.

3. Accordingly, the Secretary-General requested approval of additional commitment authority for the period from 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995 and, subject to the extension of the mandate of MINURSO by the Security Council after 31 May 1995, in an amount of $4,806,600 gross for the period from 1 to 30 June 1995.

4. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on the financing of MINURSO (A/49/771/Add.1), said that, in the letter annexed to the report, the Advisory Committee had given its concurrence for the Secretary-General to enter into commitments in an amount not exceeding $17,290,100 gross for the period from 1 January to 31 March 1995. It had also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a budget for MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 30 June 1995 for presentation to the General Assembly at its resumed forty-ninth session in March 1995 and had suggested that, depending on such action as the Security Council might take on MINURSO with regard to the period beyond 31 May 1995, a further budget could be prepared for the period from 1 July to 31 December 1995, which could be considered by the Advisory Committee and the General Assembly in June 1995.

5. In paragraph 15 of its report, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of all of the additional staff and other resources requested for work connected

with the Identification Commission. At the same time, it questioned the need to fill vacancies in other areas, such as administration, and recommended that the 21 vacancies in administration should not be filled at the current stage until such time as the Secretary-General could justify that the workload warranted it. He wished to make it clear, however, that the Advisory Committee was not recommending the deletion of the posts in question from the staffing table. Indeed, if the workload warranted it, then the Secretary-General should fill them and provide justification for doing so in his next report on MINURSO.

6. Taking into account the comments in paragraphs 15, 16, 20, 22 and 23 of its report, the Advisory Committee, in paragraph 26, recommended appropriation and assessment of an amount of $28,839,700 gross for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 December 1994 to 31 May 1995; depending on extension of the mandate by the Security Council after 31 May 1995, it further recommended that the Secretary-General should be authorized to enter into commitments not exceeding $4,806,600 gross for the month of June 1995 and that that amount should be assessed; and for the period from 1 July to 31 December 1995, depending on such action as the Council might take with regard to the mandate of MINURSO, it recommended approval of commitment authority in the amount of $33,555,000 gross to be committed and assessed at a monthly rate not to exceed $5,592,500 gross.

7. Mr. SCOTTI (France) noted that the report of the Secretary-General was dated 7 March 1995 but had been made available to the Committee only on 31 March 1995. The report of the Advisory Committee dated 29 March 1995 had also been made available on 31 March 1995 in the official languages of the Organization. The late issuance of essential documentation was one of the principal weaknesses in the budgetary process in the United Nations. In the case of France, authority to commit public monies must be sought from the appropriate oversight agency which must therefore be consulted in a timely manner. Accordingly, it was not possible for his delegation to pronounce immediately on draft financial decisions, especially those containing requests for assessments. Since draft decision A/C.5/49/L.47 did not provide for the assessment of funds, however, his delegation would not oppose its adoption.

8. Draft decision A/C.5/49/L.47 was adopted.

AGENDA ITEM 130: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR RWANDA (continued) (A/49/375/Add.2; A/C.5/49/L.46)

9. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) (A/49/375/Add.2), said that, in its resolution 49/20, the General Assembly had decided, inter alia, to authorize the Secretary-General to enter into commitments, in connection with the maintenance of UNAMIR, for the four-month period beyond 9 December 1994, at a monthly rate not to exceed $15 million gross. On the basis of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (S/1994/1344), the Security Council had decided, in its resolution 965 (1994), to extend the mandate of UNAMIR until 9 June 1995, and to expand its responsibilities to include a contribution to the security in Rwanda of personnel of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and assistance in the establishment and training of a new, integrated, national police force.

10. In order to finance the operation of UNAMIR after 9 April 1995, a revised cost estimate had been prepared for the period from 10 December 1994 to 9 June 1995 amounting to $158,449,600 gross, which incorporated the commitment authority previously authorized for the period from 10 December 1994 to 9 April 1995 by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/20. In the light of the most recent information, however, the cost estimate for that period had now been reduced to $153.9 million gross, for which an appropriation was requested. Pending the review by the Advisory Committee of his report, the Secretary-General requested commitment authority in the amount of $82.4 million gross for the period up to the end of the current mandate, namely, 9 June 1995. He also requested as an ad hoc arrangement, the apportionment of the amount of $30 million gross for the period from 10 February to 9 April 1995. Moreover, should the Security Council extend the mandate of UNAMIR beyond 9 June 1995, the Secretary-General further requested authorization to enter into commitments up to the amount of $19,342,000 gross for the period from 10 June to 9 July 1995.

11. Mr. MSELLE (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that the timing of the Committee's consideration of the requests before it illustrated a problem which needed to be addressed urgently by the Fifth Committee. He was referring to the tendency to set deadlines for the consideration by the Fifth Committee of documents over the preparation of which it had no control. In his view, it would be wiser to set deadlines for the consideration only of those documents which were already available to the Committee. In the current instance, the deadline set by the Fifth Committee had not been met and interim arrangements had therefore had to be made to permit the operations of UNAMIR to continue pending consideration by the General Assembly of the reports of the Advisory Committee and of the Secretary-General. The report of the Advisory Committee* provided a basis for those interim arrangements.

12. The Advisory Committee's report was based on the most recent information available and reviewed the Secretary-General's estimates and other issues raised. Annexes III and VI to that report were intended to replace the annexes to the report of the Secretary-General.

13. Based on the observations contained in its report, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate $143,417,100 gross for UNAMIR for the period from 10 December 1994 to 9 June 1995, inclusive of the amount of $60 million gross authorized in paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 49/20 for the maintenance of UNAMIR for the period from 10 December 1994 to 9 April 1995. For the period from 10 June to 31 December 1995, should the Security Council decide to extend UNAMIR beyond 9 June 1995, the Advisory Committee recommended appropriation of $131,038,700 gross to be assessed on Member States in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 49/233.

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* Subsequently issued as document A/49/501/Add.1.

14. Mr. SCOTTI (France) pointed out that, although the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/375/Add.2) was dated 6 March 1995, it had been made available only on 20 March 1995, and that the report of the Advisory Committee had not yet been issued as an official document. The fact that the Committee was again considering requests for appropriations in a situation of emergency was a disservice to UNAMIR, to Rwanda and to the Organization itself. His delegation was of the view that the Committee was not in a position to take a decision on the draft decision before it, particulary since it contained a request for an assessment. The operations of UNAMIR could only go forward, therefore, on the basis of the most recent budget estimates reviewed by the Advisory Committee and approved by the General Assembly in resolution 49/20.

15. The CHAIRMAN said that discussion of the item would continue in informal meeting.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.